

Spring Newsletter

Volume 19

April 2006

Lowell Historical Society Triple Event

You're Invited

Annual Meeting – Lowell Postcard Book Signing – Apothecaries of Lowell

When:	Sunday May 7, 2006 at 1:30 pm
Place:	McDonough Magnet School – John St. Entrance - Lowell, MA *** Note New Location ***
Parking:	Joseph Downes Parking Garage (John St. Garage)

The Annual Business meeting begins at 1:30 pm followed by a book signing for the new Lowell: The River City postcard book. At 2:30, the Lowell Apothecaries program will outline the rise and fall of the locally-owned pharmacy in Lowell. Hear current and former owners/pharmacists discuss a broad range of topics from the popular soda fountain of the 40s, 50s & 60s to the impact of the chain store to current costs of prescription pricing. View our exhibit of apothecary antiques. Panelists include pharmacists Bob Audet, Bill Alexis and El Vozeolas.

Best place to park: John St. garage directly across the street from the McDonough Magnet School (Old Lowell Trade School). Enter the arched opening from the John St. end of building.

Schedule of Events

1:30 to 1:45 pm	Annual Business Meeting and Announcement of Lowell: The River City postcard book
1:45 to 2:30 pm	Book signing – Lowell: The River City
2:30 to 4:00 pm	Apothecaries of Lowell panel discussion and exhibit
4:00 to 4:30 pm	Book signing – Lowell: The River City

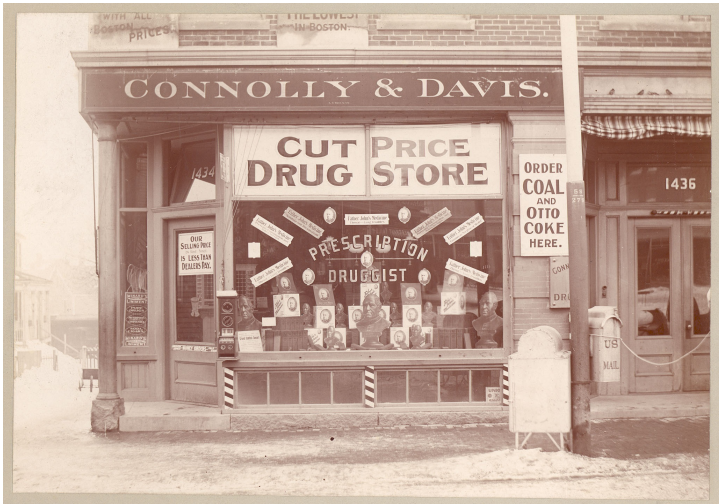
Postcard Books on Sale

The Lowell Postcard Book Series will be available for purchase. Both Lowell: The Mill City & Lowell: The River City are \$21.99 plus tax. Society Members receive a 10% discount. An excellent Mother's Day or Father's Day gift. Other LHS merchandise will be on sale. For example, the 1936 Flood DVD, Mourning Glory (Lowell Cemetery) DVD and paperback, reproduction postcards, magnets and more. Events are free of charge. Refreshments served.

Call Cliff Hoyt at 458-6575 for additional information.

Lowell's Family Pharmacists

By Cliff Hoyt



Drug Store/Pharmacy displaying Lowell's Father John's Medicine advertising in the window. (*The Lowell Museum Collection, Lowell Historical Society.*)

The small independent family-owned pharmacies of Lowell's past are dying out, facing literal extinction. The 1960 Lowell City Directory listed 44 pharmacies in Lowell and none of these merchants of health belonged to a large chain store. Today, only one independent family-owned pharmacy exists in Lowell. What happened in our society to cause this phenomenon? What was it like to operate a "corner drug store"? What has society lost and gained as a result of their decline? The Lowell Historical Society has brought together three local pharmacists with more than 135 years of combined experience behind the counter to answer these and more questions on May 7, 2006, from 1:30 - 4:30 at the Lowell Historical Society's Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held at the McDonough Magnet School, Lowell (opposite the front entrance to the John St. Parking Deck.) Our panel will review their backgrounds and education that led them to the pharmacy profession. Together we will explore the day-to-day operation of a drug store and how it changed over their careers. They will discuss the impact of such varied items as soda fountains and big government.

Our distinguished panel includes:

Bob Audet graduated from the New England College of Pharmacy (now part of Northeastern University) in 1956. While in school, Bob worked at the Lowell Pharmacy at

the intersection of Moody St. & Aiken. Lowell Pharmacy was situated in the "Little Canada" section of Lowell and Bob's ability to speak & write in French proved to be a valuable resource. Bob and each of our other future pharmacist was required, as an unwritten rule by the school, to work at a pharmacy as an apprentice while they were studying for their degree.

After graduation, Bob began working at Pawtucket Pharmacy at the corner of School St. and Pawtucket St. Bob took a short break to help the Army in 1958 & 1959. After leaving the Army he returned to Pawtucket Pharmacy. He eventually bought the pharmacy in 1962 and has operated it to the present. In his early years Pawtucket Pharmacy initially served French (across the street from Franco American School), Irish and Greek populations of Lowell. Now a significant part of their customer base is Vietnamese and Cambodian. This pharmacy is the last independent pharmacy in Lowell and the last to provide individualized compounding of prescriptions.

In addition to serving his customers for over 50 years, Bob is a past president of both the Lowell and Massachusetts State Pharmaceutical Association. Additionally, he is a past president of the Lowell Visiting Nurses Association.



Pawtucket Pharmacy at School St. and Pawtucket – The last family-owned independent pharmacy in Lowell.

Bill Alexis graduated from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, Boston in 1953. During school Bill worked at McCord's Drug Store at 256 Merrimack. He continued working at McCord's after graduation but soon took a part time job working for Bill Kaplon at the Community Pharmacy on Lakeview Ave. in Dracut. Pharmacy owners always need part time workers so that they could get a couple of days off each week. Bill's brother Lou Kaplon opened Billerica Pharmacy and in 1955 Bill Alexis started working there part time and eventually became a full time employee of Billerica Pharmacy.

a total of 46 years of service as a registered pharmacist .

- ✓ Domesick's Drug Store at 131 Chelmsford St.
- ✓ Brunelle's Family Pharmacy at 268 Branch
- ✓ Gallagher's Drug Store at 502 Chelmsford St.
- ✓ Tyler Park Pharmacy (both manager and pharmacist) at 590 Westford St.

Galen Drug was at 86 Dummer St in Lowell. In 1967 El turned the pharmacy over to his brother. El then opened a pharmacy in Salem, NH which he named Galen Liggett-Rexall Drug. In 1980 he sold the pharmacy and it was renamed Birch Super Drug. As part of the sale of the pharmacy, El agreed to work at the store for 10 years but not as a pharmacist. After the 10 years were up, he retired at the age of 75.

During his years as a pharmacist, El also served as: a past President for the Lowell Pharmaceutical Association, a member on the Lowell Welfare board, the Chairman on the Public Relation Committee of the Massachusetts Pharmaceutical Association which was responsible for the Mass Bill for the Freedom of Choice Pharmacy bill for Welfare recipients. El also invented and marketed the Tel-Ring which provided an early method to record doctor's prescriptions over the by phone and therefore ensure that the doctor's directions were followed.

eBay Auctions of Lowell Interest



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Growing up in the Neighborhoods

Janine "Beausoleil" Whitcomb

I dedicate this to my Mom and Dad who instilled in me the importance of simplicity.

Reminiscing about my days living on Salem Street has brought back the fondest of memories. It's as though it were yesterday when I was a neighbor to Saint Joseph's Hospital. The tenement blocks were filled with large French-Canadian families. On second thought, Stas wasn't French, nor were my babysitters, the McCreedy's. There was Miss Sullivan next door and Thelma across the way and, oh yes, the Greek woman in the tan tenement block down the street. Anyway, one thing for sure, no child was without a friend, or two, or three. There were plenty of children to go around.

In those youthful days no child would ever be seen knocking at a door to ask a friend out to play. Standing in front of the door, loudly singing out the name of your friend, be it alto, soprano, or bass, was the only way to reach them. A typical day of play might consist of a game of hopscotch, or jump rope, playing with dolls and carriages, hitting marbles around in the dirt and maybe some roller-skating. We might play Giant Steps, or Red Light, or even Kick-the-Can. We'd gather a large group of all ages and have a game of kickball in the "Big Yard", with someone always watching for the "Fuzz." The "Big Yard" was a private yard and police were always combing the neighborhood, doing their duty and chasing us out. We didn't have yards or swimming pools. When it was very hot and there was an afternoon rain shower, we would prance around in our bathing suits, splashing about in the puddles and having just so much fun!

In the winter we would play "King of the Mountain" on what seemed to be the highest mounds of snow. Proudly wearing mittens our moms knitted, we'd go about creating snowmen, having snowball fights and digging the greatest snow forts. All of the neighborhood kids would gather at the "Ledge" to do some serious sledding. The "Ledge" was behind the "Moosehead," but we never got tempted! After a full day outdoors we'd go in and sit by the stove with our feet in the oven to warm them up.

On any given day if we felt like a snack, we didn't bother to go home. We would just venture off to Bradt's Cracker Shop and eat crackers off the ground that didn't quite meet the standard for packaging. We would get chased away from there too! I suppose the owner didn't think it was all that healthy for us kids to be eating off the ground, or maybe he meant them to be pickings for the birds. I think we just liked the whole drama of being chased away.

With our nickel in hand we'd head down to "Henry's Corner Store" for candy. To earn that nickel we may have had to go to Cote's Market to pick up groceries for mom and Memere too. Every Sunday morning Uncle Jerry would send us down to Elias' on Merrimack Street for his weekly newspapers. We would do that after Mass, and maybe stop at the Royal Steak House for a muffin, but mostly we'd go to Sweetland Gardens. Yes, sometimes we did skip Mass, and most times we never got caught.

To spook ourselves a bit, we would go off to the Old Ladies Home to peek around in the windows. How fascinating that building was to children. Saint Joseph's Hospital had the Nursing School, and we'd go peeping in their windows too, to catch a glimpse of the dummy lying on the table, imagining it was real and that we sometimes saw it move. We used to spook ourselves crazy. Then we'd visit the Franco-American Orphanage to buy tiny bags of hosts from the nuns. We did like to pretend we were priests and nuns, and we'd pass out Communion. It was all in a day's fun. We had our holy moments when we'd go to the Grotto and do the Stations, or climb the many cement steps on our knees to pray in front of the cross. They'd be rumors of statues crying in the churches, and we'd pay a visit to them thinking the end of the world was coming. We were definitely swallowed up in faith.

Every Friday during Lent we'd walk down to Marie's for fish, clams and scallops. It was great that we couldn't eat meat on Fridays. Then we might pick up beans at Rochette's on a Saturday evening. Eating out was always a big treat for us. Of course at Easter time we would go to Harvey's Shoe Store to have taps put on our patent leathers. Easter Sunday we'd walk to Saint Jean de Baptist Church and tap our way to the pews hoping to be noticed. We were really styling!

At Christmas we would always walk to city hall at least one night to see the lights and pray at the crèche. If you were lucky to have a dad who was a member at the CMAC Club, you got to attend the most wonderful Christmas parties. My dad even played Santa on occasion. One year my sister's godmother had the Belvidere Shop stitch up pink velvet dresses for the two of us to wear. We felt so beautiful. We were dressed like twins, two years apart.

There was no shortage of interesting people in the neighborhood. We had "Jack the Ripper" and "Miss America". There was "Depot Annie", and "Killer", and the "Cat Lady". "Duke" the German Sheppard sunk his teeth into several of us. There were peeping toms and alley cats, and strangers in the night.

As you read this today you might be thinking, "Oh my goodness! Those poor children!" But it was the best life. It was a simple life, never lonely, always very safe. Families watched over each other. There were no enemies. We were friends who shared fun and games, laughter and tears, entering in and out of each other's homes as though we were one big family. We were all equal. So many years have gone by and yet when we are lucky enough to meet up with a friend from our past - from Salem Street, the moment takes us right back to the simple life, and it's in that moment when we appreciate how wonderful our childhood really was because we have made friends for life.

New Postcard Book Is Available NOTES FROM THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

By Pauline M. Golec, Chair

Our second postcard book, LOWELL: THE RIVER CITY, written by the Publication Committee and published by Arcadia, has arrived. Included in this book are old but familiar, and some not so familiar, scenes of the Merrimack River and other local waterways. Many local churches graced postcards from the 1890s-1940s. Some of these, highlighted in this volume, are collector's items. Schools, residences, parks, monuments, and views from Lowell's neighboring towns complete this second book. Fort Hill Park, majestic St. Peter's Church, and

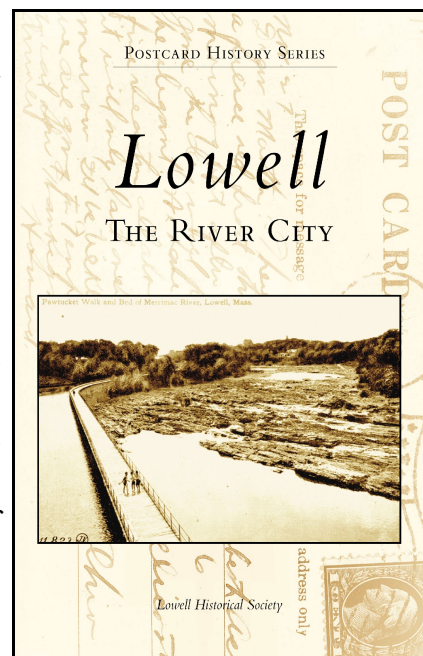
Benjamin Butler's residence are just a few of the 200 images found in LOWELL: THE RIVER CITY. The last chapter of the book features postcards in color.

Copies of our first postcard book, LOWELL: THE MILL CITY, are still available. Images of mills, businesses, community services, street scenes, disasters, organizations, leisure

activities, and "greetings" type postcards fill this book, as well as a brief history of the postcard.

The Publication Committee thanks those who loaned postcards or offered research help for the postcard books, in which they are gratefully acknowledged. Finally, as chair of the Publication Committee, thanks to Martha Mayo, Lew Karabatsos, and Tom Langan for their hard work, and considerable talent. The effort and dedication of the Committee made possible two postcard books which the Society is proud to claim and sell.

A book signing will be held at the Lowell Historical Society's Annual meeting on May 7, 2006 held for the first time at **McDonough Magnet School – John St. Entrance - Lowell, MA** between 1:30 and 4:30.



Lowell Trivia

By Martha Mayo

1. Which federal housing project was one of the first in the U.S.?
2. What is the Indian name for this area?
3. Who was an Olympic Walker from Lowell?
4. What area company produced over 330,000 feet of glass in 1820?

Answers are on the last page of the newsletter.

Lowell Historical Society
P.O. Box 1826
Lowell, MA 01853

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The preservation of Lowell history depends heavily on YOUR membership. If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal for 2006, please do so as soon as possible.

Lowell Historical Society

The Lowell Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve and publish materials related to Lowell and to promote the study of the history of the City.

We are located at the Boot Cotton Mills Museum
115 John Street, Fourth Floor
Downtown Lowell Massachusetts 01852

The office is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays,
from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The telephone number
is 978 970-5180

On the Web at: <http://ecommunity.uml.edu/lhs>

Answers to Trivia Questions:

1) North Common, 2) Wamesit, 3) Al Mangan, 4)
Chelmsford Glassworks

Calendar of Events

Trivia Night

April 29, 2006 - 7:00 pm \$10 per person donation
Club Lafayette, 465 Fletcher St., Lowell
*[A fun evening out with the family and friends playing
Trivial Pursuit with Lowell Trivia added. Bring a
team of 2-10 people or be added to an existing team.
Proceeds help preserve the LHS collection and our
special programs. Call Tom Langan at 978-452-0897
with any questions.]*

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Annual Business Meeting

Book Signing—Lowell Postcard Book Vol. II

Program – “Apothecaries of Lowell”

May 7, 2006 - 1:30 – 4:30 pm

McDonough Magnet School, Lowell, MA

Opp. St. John's St. Parking Deck

****** Notice New Location******

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All of our programs are free and open to the public.
For information or directions call 978-970-5180